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THE
SPIRIT
OF
PARTY.

CHAPTER the FIRST.

Being an

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

HISTORY

OF THE

Knight *of the* Bridge.

Addressed to the People of IRELAND.

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THE

SPIRIT of PARTY.

Chapter the FIRST.

My COUNTRYMEN,

A Certain Husbandman, returning homeward at Evening, perceived, from an Eminence, that there was an extraordinary Tumult in the Town of which he was a Native and Inhabitant,

bitant, and on a nearer Approach discerned who the Combatants were.

Now, had this Town, which contained his House, Family, and Relations, been assaulted by a Body of Enemies from abroad, he could not have hesitated a Moment what Side to chuse, in that Case, he could have had no Arguments to form, no Doubts whereon to deliberate, no Questions to ask; Inclination, Interest, Equity, every Impulse divine and human would instantly have rushed upon him and impelled him to the Rescue of his Country and Kindred. But, observing, that, instead of any foreign Assaults or
In-

Invasion, a Number of his Fellow Townsmen had fallen together by the Ears, Countrymen against Countrymen, Relations against Relations, and Friends against Friends, though he thought it base to be an idle and unconcerned Spectator, yet here he found deep Cause for Consideration and Demur, while he yet knew not who were the Injured or who the Aggressors, while he delayed to assist even Those whom he loved most, for fear of offending These who were also intitled to his Regard and Protection.

HAD this Husbandman been a Man of precipitate Affections, or One who made light of Justice
or

or Duty, he would neither have been solicitous in his Inquiries nor tedious in his Resolves, in spite of some short Feelings of Compunction, he would warmly have joined wherever his Inclinations had led, he would thereby have carryed Encrease to the Mischief and to the Tumult, and would probably have become the greatest of Enemies to that very Party he intended to befriend, by supporting in them a Spirit of Malice and Contention.

BUT, as he happened to be a Man, who, in order to determine the Motives of Action, was accustomed to ask himself this short and simple Question, *What ought I to*

I to do? he seldom failed of speedy and due Information. He interposed, he inquired, he did his best to check, to persuade, to appease, to reconcile, and equally to restore All to Concord and Amity. When he found this impracticable, he next used his Endeavours to withhold Those who yet were quiet from mixing in the 'Fray. But, as this also happened to exceed his Influence, he lastly took up Arms against Those whom he perceived to be the Wrong Doers, in order *equally to serve both Parties by causing Justice to prevail*; for he considered, that the Prevalence of Justice ever was and ever will be the Interest of the Public, nay, that *it must finally*

finally be more the Interest of each Man living that Truth should be triumphant, than that he himself should be triumphant in any Contest against Truth.

HERE, a Reader, of a quick Temper or warm Imagination, may be hasty to inquire, and perhaps to conjecture, the Causes, the Parties, and the Consequences of this Affray ; but as I have not the same Reason for being in the same Hurry, in order to inform him duely, I shall proceed deliberately.

WITH this View, I find it absolutely incumbent to premise that the Inhabitants of the afore-said

said Town were Tenants in Com-
 mon, where, though Each held
 several little Properties apart, and
 wholly exclusive of the Property
 of Others, yet the great the im-
 portant the durable Property of
 Each, however it consisted, in
 Possessions or Privileges by Lease-
 hold, by Charter, or Custom estab-
 lished, was equally the Claim and
 the Property of All, they parti-
 cipated alike of it as of Air or of
 Light, it was the Bond of their
 Community, it was that alone
 which made them a Society or
 Constitution, and Interest, which
 generally divides Mankind, here-
 in served to strengthen this People
 by joining them together.

B

AMONG

AMONG Persons thus formed to a Community of Interests it is evident that two Causes of Quarrel may arise, the One for private, the Other for public Concerns, the One personal and confined, the Other social and indeterminable, the First equal to and respecting Individuals alone, the Second equal to and respecting the whole Community.

Now, as much Dispute hath arisen, among the Learned and the Politicians of those Days, touching the Nature and Justice of the aforesaid Quarrel, as, whether the same was of a private or social Import? and how far the
Public

Public had a Right to intermeddle? I must beg some short Attention to a few Words on this Head, before I can proceed with due Propriety in my Tale.

IN respect to any Cause of private Quarrel, in any Community so associated by Interests and ordered by Laws, should any Member thereof be injured by Another, the Party injured hath first a Right to use such personal Powers as Nature provided for his Defence or Vindication, and, should these prove insufficient, he hath a further Resource in the Laws of such Society : But, he hath not a Right by *Hue and Cry* to raise the whole Posse of his Country

Country, nay it would be iniquitous in him so to call off the Attention and interrupt the Business and Peace of the Public, because public Peace and Business, being the Concern of All, must be more than equivalent to the Interest or Concern of any Individual.

SUCH a *Hue and Cry* would be like the Clamour of a certain impudent Jester who alarmed the whole Neighbourhood by a Cry of Fire at Midnight, the Panic became general for such they thought the Concern, they arose, they inquired, and were informed, by this Impertinent, that a few Mugs of good Liquor would be
suffi-

sufficient to extinguish all the Fire he complained of, the People accordingly took the Joke as they ought and quenched the Flame of his Thirst in a Horse Pond.

Now, if no Man hath a Right to call up the Public, in order to redress an actual Grievance, much less hath he a Right to rowze and alarm them where that Grievance is barely imaginary or disputable, and least of all hath he a Right to summon their Aid to support and abett him in that which is wrong. And, where no Man hath a Right to call the Public, Iniquity must be multiplied should the Public interfere.

WITH

WITH respect to the just Causes for public Complaint and Quarrel, they are, no doubt, many and various, but then such Causes must ever be of public Concern, the Concern must in no Case be private, must in no Case be partial, it must pervade the Constitution, it must respect the whole Community.

IN such Cases it may not be merely excusable, it may be lawful, it may be the Duty of a People, to withstand Kings, and Princes, and Potentates, and Powers, to the last Stretch of their Might, and to the last Moment of their Existence.

BUT

BUT then, a People's being busied or concerned about an Affair, does not always infer that such is the Concern or the Business of that People.

WE have heard of mighty Emperors who have been busied in catching Flies, and of Heroes who have been wonderfully expert at the Distaff, but, surely, neither of these was the Province of an Hero or an Emperor. A whole Nation, in their collective or representative Body, may be as earnestly employed, as solicitous, nay as solemn, in the Concern of Chasing or Preserving a little Animal called a Hare, as the
Senate

Senate of *Rome* was, in the Chase of their great Enemy and the Preservation of their Commonwealth, when the Ambassadors of *Pyrrhus* took them for an Assembly of Gods.

Now, as a whole Nation may be very impertinently concerned, a whole Nation also may be very factiously employed.

By a Faction is generally understood, a smaller Body of a People ardently combined in Sentiment and Endeavour towards the attaining some partial Point against Government: But a Faction may be more truly and inherently defined, a Body of People,
 whe-

whether small or great, of the Governors or the Governed, combined in an Attempt against Constitution. If this Combination is of the Rulers, to invade, or abridge the Possessions or Privileges of the People, it may properly be intitled a Faction of the Court. If this Combination is of the People to invade, or to obstruct the constitutional Powers of their Rulers, it may properly be intitled a Faction of the Country.

THE Examples, that occur in the Process of our History, will best serve at once to explain and illustrate the Utility and Truth of the above Observations.

IT IS RECORDED of the above Town and Parts adjacent, that they made One of several Manors of which one Person was Lord.

THE People had many Possessions, and Liberties, and Privileges, which they held independent of the Will of their Lord; but their chief Privilege consisted in appointing the Persons who constituted the Manor-Court, and those Persons had the further Privilege of appointing their proper Seneschal; and, however uncommon the Case may appear, they had holden these Rights, quite Time out of Memory, independent of the Will or Dictates

Dictates of any Lord that had ever presided over the said Manor. For, as all the said Possessions, and Liberties, and Privileges, were constitutional and of common Concern to the Society, they were always held to be a just Subject of public Claim and Assertion.

THE Lord, on the other Hand, over and above the usual Rents and Duties reserved, had a Right to fill up certain Offices among the People ; and, tho' it was a Matter of partial and private Concern, and generally of a very insignificant Import, whether this Man or that Man, or t'other Man was named, yet, the Right of Nomination, becoming Part of the Constitution,

stitution, thereby became also a public Concern, and the People were therefore interested in asserting and maintaining to their Lord the said Right.

FOR, though the due Administration of the aforesaid Offices might dispense much Good here and there among the People, yet no material Damage could possibly accrue, from the bad Morals or Conduct of the Officers, to the Society ; as those Officers, notwithstanding the Favour of their Lord, were still left subjected and exposed to the Laws, as also accountable to the Court of the said Manor, over whose Judgment the said Lord had no Controul.

SUCH

- S U C H was the Balance of Rights, and such the Bond of Connection, between the aforesaid Manor and the aforesaid Lord ; their Powers were supported by the same Foundation, their Interests were interwoven in the same Web.

BUT, in the Days of which we are writing, there arose an extraordinary Man among this People. He was a Native and Inhabitant of the said Manor, and had Possessions of a considerable Value therein. He was said to be endowed with every manly Excellence, wise, valiant, easy, affable, humane ; an honest Dealer, an
 hos-

hospitable Neighbour, a pleasing Companion, a kind Master, a tender Parent, and a staunch Friend.

SUCH Virtues could not long be concealed in a Corner, they soon gained him the Love, and that Love gained him the Respect, and that Respect gained him the Confidence of all this People.

THEY intrusted him with their private, they advised with him in all their public Concerns, they unanimously voted him a Member of their Manor-Court, and, on the Death of the Seneschal, he was as unanimously chosen by that Court to succeed him.

THE

THE Fame of the rare Qualities of this new Senefchal could not be long a Secret to the Ear of the Lord, and this Lord kindly conceived that he could not do an Act of greater Beneficence to his People than to honour him with his Confidence and to grace him with his Favours.

HERE, READER, let me pause, let me stop a while on the Entrance into the Regions of Ambition, on the Bound that divides the personal from the public Province, on that dangerous Limit which Goodness is so seldom permitted to pass. Let me look back with Reverence to the Virtues re-

cited

cited, let me look forward with Pity on the Faults that are to come.

FOR, as *Janus* was impressed with a Duplicate of Faces, Each looking a different Way and wholly contrasted in Features to the Other, such is the double Portrait of this renowned Seneschal which the Annals of those Times exhibit to your View. The first Part of this History hath presented you with the one Picture, the second shall furnish you with the Reverse.

End of the FIRST CHAPTER.

